FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Jim Smith
Secretary of State

DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES
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September 17, 1991

Mr. Octavio J. Visiedo
Superintendent of Schools
Dade County Public Schools
School Board Administration Building
1450 NE 12th Avenue
Miami, Florida 33132

RE: (1) Buena Vista Elementary School, 3001 NW 2nd Avenue, Miami
(2) Santa Clara Elementary School, 1051 NW 29th Terrace, Miami
(3) Miami Edison Middle School, NW 62nd Street & Second Avenue, Miami
(4) Mays Middle School, Goulds

Dear Mr. Visiedo:

On August 6 this office received a letter from Mr. Erick Laventure, Design Coordinator for the Dade County Public Schools, requesting an historic significance evaluation for the first three schools referenced above. Mr. Walter Marder, Preservation Architect on our staff responded on September 10 (copy enclosed) that the Buena Vista Elementary and the Miami Edison Middle schools appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. He did not specifically address the Santa Clara School property.

The Miami Edison School was listed in the National Register in 1986. Based on the photographs and information in the Site File, we concur with Mr. Marder's opinion that the Buena Vista School is potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. The Santa Clara School has not been recorded in the Florida Site File, however, a Florida Department of Education (FDOE) listing of 40 year old Dade County schools lists it as having been built in 1925. Therefore, if it retains its integrity and is either historically or architecturally significant, it also may be eligible for listing in the National Register. In order to provide a definitive evaluation of the Santa Clara School, we request photographs of the exterior(s) and interior(s) school building(s) and a brief historical description.

It is our understanding that two or three of these schools have been designated nonfunctional as school facilities. We recommend that the Board designate these schools as historic educational facilities and use funds generated for rehabilitation and remodeling pursuant to Chapter 235.435, Florida Statutes, (copy enclosed) to restore the facilities for continued use as schools. As Mr. Marder indicated, if the state is undertaking or assisting demolition or renovation activities, Section 267.061(2), Florida Statutes, (copy enclosed) would apply. This statute requires that the effect of the project on historic properties be taken into account in planning an undertaking such as demolition or rehabilitation. For undertakings which would have an adverse effect on historic resources, the referenced statute requires that timely steps be taken to determine that no feasible or prudent alternatives to these adverse effects exist before carrying out the undertaking. Where no such alternatives exist, timely steps must be taken to avoid, minimize or mitigate the adverse effects. Demolition of these three schools would have a serious adverse effect on a property listed in the National Register and on two others that may be eligible for listing. Our architectural staff is available for consultation regarding alternatives to demolition and potential alternative uses for the buildings.

In addition, copies of your letter and Ms. Rosen's memorandum to Ms. Louise Yarbrough, Executive Director, of Dade Heritage Trust, concerning the Mays Middle School in Goulds, Florida, have been provided to this office (copies enclosed). Because this facility was built in 1935 and is reported to be the first rural Black school in Dade County, we believe it is of local historical significance and, therefore, potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. We recommend that the Mays school be recognized for its important role in the history of the Goulds community and be added to the Dade County list of historically significant schools.

Regarding Ms. Rosen's memorandum, we remind you that renovation, expansion, and demolition of historic school buildings, or new construction adjacent to historic schools, which the state (FDOE) is undertaking or assisting, must be reviewed under Section 267.061(2), F.S., would apply. If such undertakings are federally assisted, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, would also apply. We encourage the Dade County School Board to designate school facilities as historic educational facilities whenever this is appropriate. As is stipulated in Section 235.435(1)(g), F.S., "the Division of Historical Resources of the Department of State or the appropriate historic preservation board under chapter 266" (copy enclosed) must certify that a facility meets one of the criteria for designation listed under subparagraph g before the School Board can make such a designation.

Should you have any questions regarding these recommendations and comments, or if you would like to discuss possible alternatives to demolition of the three schools in Miami, please contact Ms. Laura Kammerer or Mr. Marder of my staff at (904) 487-2333. We look forward to working with you in any way possible toward the successful resolution of these historic preservation concerns.

Sincerely,

George W. Percy, Director
Division of Historical Resources
and
State Historic Preservation Officer

GWP/Klk
xc: Mr. Xavier Suarez, Mayor, City of Miami
Dr. H. James Schoreer, Educational Facilities Division, FDOE
Mr. Erick Laventure, Dade County Public Schools
Ms. Louise Yarbrough, Dade Heritage Trust
Ms. Margot Ammidown, Metro-Dade, Div. of Historical Resources
Ms. Sarah Eaton, Dade County Planning Department

Enclosures (6)